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Country programme recommendation**

Gabon

Addendum

Summary

The present addendum to the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2001 contains the final country programme recommendation for Board approval.

It contains a recommendation for funding the country programme of Gabon, which has an annual planning level of $1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of $3,100,000 from general resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $3,000,000 in supplementary funds, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2002 to 2006.

* E/ICEF/2001/12.

** The original country note provided only indicative figures for estimated programme cooperation. The figures provided in the present addendum are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 2000. They will be contained in the "Summary of 2001 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.73).

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Basic data[a] *(2000 unless otherwise stated)*	
Child population (millions, under 18 years)	0.5
U5MR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	90
IMR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	60
Underweight (% moderate and severe)	..
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) (1981)	600
Literacy (% male/female) (2000)	80/62
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1998)	82/83
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1995)	59
Use of improved drinking water sources (%) (2000)	86
Government-financed systematic vaccination (EPI) (%)	..
GNP per capita (US$)	3 300
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
Tuberculosis	89 per cent
Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	31 per cent
Measles	55 per cent
Poliomyelitis	31 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus	45 per cent

[a] Taken from the publication "Progress since the World Summit for Children: A statistical review", supplement to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children" (A/S-27/3), and possibly differing from those contained in this document.

The situation of children and women

1. The situation of children and women is still essentially as described in the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2001 (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.12). Some new information has come to light since that time, however.

2. The preliminary findings of the first population and health survey of Gabon, carried out by the Government with the support of development partners (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO)), were published at the end of March 2001. According to the preliminary data, 81 per cent of the population live in urban areas. The infant and under-five mortality rates are estimated at 58 and 89 per 1,000 live births respectively and are thus lower than earlier estimates. The exclusive breastfeeding rate in infants aged 0 to 3 months is only 8 per cent; 12 per cent are not breast-fed; and 38 per cent are already given the bottle. Only 35 per cent of all children are given oral rehydration salts when episodes of diarrhoea occur. The rate of access to safe drinking water is 78 per cent for the country as a whole (36 per cent in rural areas and 94 per cent in urban areas).

3. The net school enrolment rate is 86.3 per cent, with no gender-based disparities. Approximately 6 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men have not been

to school. Approximately 36 per cent of boys and 24 per cent of girls complete primary school, while 42 per cent of girls, as compared with 38 per cent of boys, reach middle school and only 12 per cent of girls and 20 per cent of boys reach high school. These losses can be explained by the poor quality of the educational system, characterized by high repetition rates (more than one third at the primary level) and dropout rates. Less than 20 per cent of children have access to pre-school education facilities. The literacy rate is 77 per cent for women and 82 per cent for men.

4. A large portion of the population is familiar with at least one means of protection against human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection, but the rate of use of such means is very low: 9.4 per cent for women and 30 per cent for men. A study carried out in the main cities in late 2000 shows seroprevalence among the adult population as reaching the critical threshold of 8 per cent.

5. Child victims of trafficking for exploitative labour purposes (nearly 1,000) and street children are a distressing phenomenon caused by increasing urbanization and entrenched poverty but also by Gabon's economic situation, which stands in stark contrast to that of other countries of the subregion. The Government has set up an interministerial committee charged with implementing the Platform for Action of the Subregional Consultation held in Libreville in February 2000. Since the beginning of 2001, new partners (the United States Agency for International Development and the Spanish cooperation agency) have been working alongside the Government, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization in activities to train and care for child victims of trafficking.

6. In recent months, the Government has paid greater attention to gender issues, as shown by the promulgation of the law on the social and health protection of women, the establishment of the women's rights and gender equality observatory and the development of activities, aimed at senior officials, including members of the Government, in the areas of advocacy and capacity-building for gender mainstreaming in development programmes.

7. Economic conditions characterized by favourable oil prices and dollar exchange rates, coupled with an effort to improve public finances, resulted in a positive budget balance in 2000 amounting to approximately 15 per cent of the gross domestic product. In September 2000, Gabon signed a letter of intent with the International Monetary Fund. It will receive $119 million for a period of 18 months. To reduce the debt burden, the servicing of which amounted to 77.5 per cent of the State's own resources in 1998, the Paris Club permitted Gabon, in December 2000, to reschedule approximately three quarter of its arrears. During 2001, the Government will draw up a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with the support of the World Bank and United Nations agencies.

8. To forestall the economic and social consequences of the decline in oil revenues anticipated for the coming years, the Government is currently adopting new measures: a national urban development strategy, amendment of the civil service regulations, strategic planning of the national response to HIV/AIDS and sectoral reforms in education and health.

Programme cooperation, 1997-2001

9. The current programme is the first complete cycle of cooperation between Gabon and UNICEF. Its aim is to help improve the survival, protection and development of children and women in keeping with the requirements of the international conventions ratified by Gabon, primarily the Convention on the Rights of the Child, through the promotion of social sector reforms and support for carrying them out. The programme consists of three projects: social planning; advocacy and social mobilization; and strengthening of basic social services.

10. Progress has been made in advocacy for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Approximately 1,000 children, parents, teachers and members of local governments have been made aware of and educated about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In November 1999, with UNICEF support, the Government drafted its initial report on the implementation of the Convention, for consideration in January 2001. The programme has also helped to increase awareness of the principal problems affecting the attainment of children's and women's rights and to determine the measures needed to respond to those problems: the study on the 20/20 Initiative in Gabon and the organization of the national workshop to validate and adopt a plan of action; the study on trafficking in children in Gabon and the holding of the Subregional Consultation on the Development of Strategies to Fight Child Trafficking for Exploitative Labour Purposes; and participation in the population and health survey.

11. The programme has made it possible to revitalize four of the eight health centres in the Libreville health region by: implementing the minimum package of activities and renovating the technical infrastructure; organizing National Immunization Days (NIDs) to combat poliomyelitis in 1998, 1999 and 2000, with a national coverage rate of over 90 per cent; and administering vitamin A for the first time to all children aged 6 to 59 months during the second round of NIDs in 2000. Promotion of breastfeeding and child nutrition was carried out in partnership with a community-based non-governmental organization.

12. In 2000, a study on school repetition rates was carried out at the provincial and national levels, culminating in the adoption of a national plan of action to combat repetition, whose goals include improving teacher training, revising school curricula and assessing academic achievement. Together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNFPA, UNICEF also helped to prepare the national Education for All in the Year 2000 Assessment.

Lessons learned from past cooperation

13. The lessons described in the country note remain valid and new information has been added. For example, the action taken following the Libreville Consultation to assist child victims of trafficking demonstrates the need to reach a common understanding of this phenomenon, in accordance with the principles of the rights of the child. A consensus on the proposed solutions should also be reached among the countries concerned by increasing links and exchanges among them.

14. Cooperation with civil society has shown that the organizational capacities of organizations and associations remain limited. Their community base is relatively weak, particularly given Gabon's high level of urbanization. They therefore require greater support and monitoring of their joint activities.

Recommended programme cooperation, 2002-2006

	Estimated annual expenditure (In thousands of United States dollars)					
	2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*Total*
Regular resources						
Action in urban areas	340	340	340	340	327	1 687
Advocacy and social policies development	144	144	144	144	144	720
Cross-sectoral costs	136	136	136	136	149	693
Subtotal	**620**	**620**	**620**	**620**	**620**	**3 100**
Other resources						
Action in urban areas	260	260	260	260	260	1 300
Advocacy and social policies development	400	400	140	100	100	1 140
Cross-sectoral costs	112	112	112	112	112	560
Subtotal	**772**	**772**	**512**	**472**	**472**	**3 000**
Total	**1 392**	**1 392**	**1 132**	**1 092**	**1 092**	**6 100**

Country programme preparation process

15. The September 1999 mid-term review helped to place UNICEF in a better position among development partners and to lay the foundations for a participatory process in which the programme would be taken over by its principal stakeholders. This process continued during the preparation of the 2002-2006 cooperation programme, which was conducted under the general guidance of the Ministry of Planning, Programming, Development and Land Management. Preparations for analysing the situation of children and women began in May 2000. This analysis, which took a rights-based and gender-based approach, was carried out by a group directed by an academic team and made up of representatives from the primary ministries concerned and from civil society. This team also prepared the strategy note which was submitted and approved in September 2000. The framework plan of operations and the programme plans of operations were prepared between February and May 2001 by multisectoral working groups which included all stakeholders and partners in the programme, including non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system and bilateral cooperation partners, making it possible to achieve broad consensus on the programme's future direction.

16. The situation analysis was integrated into the Common Country Assessment (CCA) process undertaken as part of the reform of the United Nations system in Gabon. It complements the process by making an in-depth study of specific areas

linked to the rights of children and women. Starting from the areas of action proposed in the CCA, subsequent stages of the programme's preparation were the subject of broad exchanges of views and consultations attended by leading officials of agencies of the United Nations system, the CCA/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) technical group and representatives of non-governmental organizations, thereby ensuring the coherence of UNICEF actions in the future context of UNDAF, the official document for which will be issued in June 2001. The United Nations system is currently strengthening its cooperative programming, particularly in the health and education sectors and in cross-cutting issues such as rights, gender and HIV/AIDS.

Country programme goals and objectives

17. The goal of the 2002-2006 cooperation programme is to support national efforts to secure the rights of children and women, in keeping with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Based on the Global Movement for Children, the programme's overall objectives will help to: reduce the infant, under-five and maternal mortality rates by 10 per cent; ensure harmonious physical and mental development and quality education for all children; and protect and reduce the number of children in especially difficult circumstances. An end-of-cycle evaluation will show the extent to which these objectives have been achieved.

Relation to national and international priorities

18. The country programme is part of the Basic Cooperation Agreement signed in 2000. It is based on the Gabon 2025 strategic appraisal, the Government's general policy statement of 1999 and sectoral legislation on strategic directions. Its design was guided by the findings of the situation analysis, which identified both the need to improve certain social indicators, such as those concerning the attainment of young children's right to survival and development, and the need to address certain emerging problems such as trafficking in children and HIV/AIDS.

19. Most of the priority areas of the medium-term strategic plan and those of the Global Movement for Children will be taken into account in the programme. Activities will include: improving the quality of the educational system; assisting with the development and experimental implementation of policies for young children; strengthening a health district with a focus on improving immunization coverage in the areas where there are disparities; developing education and behaviour modification programmes for young people in order to reduce HIV/AIDS infection; and improving child protection by setting up specific juvenile justice structures and proposing a response to the problem of trafficking in children.

20. The programme will address two issues identified by the CCA: poverty and the environment. Activities to be implemented by the United Nations system as a whole will be developed within UNDAF; during its implementation, the programme will also benefit from the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, in which UNICEF is a partner.

21. The proposed programme will also ensure the continuity of certain key activities of the current programme, namely: monitoring of the implementation of

the two Conventions; follow-up to the 20/20 Initiative; elaboration of strategies to combat trafficking in children; strengthening of basic social services; and eradication of poliomyelitis.

Country programme strategy

22. The programme strategy is still based essentially on the country note. The cooperation programme will focus on six strategic areas: advocacy as a means of promoting implementation of the two Conventions, strengthening alliances and partnership and encouraging better use of national resources; national, decentralized and local capacity-building in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral (health and education) activities and multisectoral approaches benefiting children; communication as a means of adapting and modifying behaviour in order to improve child health, development and protection; provision of quality basic services, with special attention to access to services for the most vulnerable groups; gradual capacity-building of civil society so as to promote greater community participation; and complementarity of national and local activities in order to maximize their impact.

23. The programme will take a gender-based approach in order to help identify and reduce disparities, focusing particularly on efforts to combat discrimination and to promote greater equity. In view of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, its prevention and control will be a key element of the programme.

24. Improving its monitoring/evaluation and documentation components will enable the programme to make a significant contribution to validating and adapting the proposed strategies and measuring the impact and efficiency of activities in the area of basic services, and thus to the national dialogue on social policy. An emergency preparedness and response component, based on the country's emergency profile which is currently in preparation, will assist efforts to solve the problems of refugee populations and epidemics.

25. The programme will take a holistic approach to children and will implement multisectoral activities enabling them to achieve their full potential and tackling all the causes of the problems that affect the attainment of their rights. At the same time, the existing partnership and complementarity of activities of the various donors will be strengthened and new alliances will be formed, particularly with non-governmental organizations and countries of the subregion, in order to ensure a concerted response to regional problems.

26. **Action in urban areas**. This programme will be carried out in a delimited urban and peri-urban geo-demographic area with a total target population of around 50,000 children aged between 0 and 18 years. It will seek to reduce infant and under-five mortality and morbidity and to enhance the psychosocial development of young children by adopting an integrated approach. This approach will require the strengthening of operational capacities within families, communities, associations and non-governmental organizations working with young children. It will also help to enhance children's life skills and to prevent HIV/AIDS infection through the establishment, in participating schools, of an educational programme permitting quality teaching, and the promotion of young people's physical health and psychological development. It will also foster children's participation by encouraging them to express their opinions and taking their views into account.

Activities will involve children, teachers and parents, in order to create a social environment conducive to young people's personal development. Access to sexual health services will be ensured through partnership with the Mouvement gabonais pour le bien-être familial (Gabonese movement for family welfare).

27. The aim of the **advocacy and social policies development programme** is to support national efforts to adopt, implement, monitor and evaluate social policies and the promotion of reforms benefiting children and women, in accordance with government priorities. The programme will also support the elaboration of a comprehensive national policy on children and assist the Government in designing and putting in place a juvenile justice system. It will follow up the 20/20 Initiative and monitor the implementation of the national plan of action adopted in July 2000. A large part of the programme will be devoted to the implementation of the monitoring Conventions and the country's international commitments. The programme will support the dissemination of Gabon's initial report and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, due in January 2002, and the preparation of the first follow-up report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Within the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, UNICEF and the other agencies of the United Nations system will pursue awareness-raising and training on gender mainstreaming in development policies and programmes. Based on the recommendations of the Libreville Subregional Consultation held in February 2000, the programme will also include activities to support the Government and non-governmental organizations in combating trafficking in children for exploitative labour purposes, in conjunction with the fight against poverty: information and awareness-raising on the existence and extent of the phenomenon; data collection; support for the conclusion of subregional agreements; and support for the care of child victims of trafficking during repatriation. Advocacy, social mobilization and support for the planning and management of operations at the national level will also be carried out within the framework of the poliomyelitis eradication initiative. Monitoring of the situation of women and children and advocacy will make it possible to identify and mobilize actors to support complementary activities, for instance, in the areas of water supply and sanitation and ethnic minorities.

28. **Cross-sectoral costs** will help cover staff and equipment costs, as well as emergency response management. The Government of Gabon will make an annual contribution to the country programme, in accordance with the provisions of the framework plan of operations.

Monitoring and evaluation

29. A basic study will be conducted in the area of operation to evaluate maternal, perinatal, infant and under-five mortality and morbidity; children's nutritional status; and knowledge, attitude and practice with respect to the care of young children and the prevention of HIV/AIDS infection. The study will also evaluate the accessibility and quality of basic services.

30. The chief indicators used to measure progress are: number and type of measures adopted and/or applied for the benefit of children and women; number and type of reception structures and pre-school education facilities set up; and number of schools adopting education for life programmes. Qualitative methods will be used to

evaluate objectives aimed at behavioural change and participation of children. Programme monitoring will also rely on routine data collected by health and education services and child reception and protection structures. Evaluations and studies will be carried out to measure the impact of parenthood, health and family life education activities for adolescents. The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan will also include a number of indicators on the rights of the child.

Cooperation with other partners

31. The start of the 2002-2006 programming cycle will coincide with the harmonization of programming cycles by United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNFPA) and the introduction of UNDAF. Partnership within the various coordination structures (inter-agency coordinating committee for the Expanded Programme on Immunization, thematic group of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, thematic group on education) will be strengthened in the next programme: UNDP in following up the 20/20 Initiative and monitoring implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; UNFPA in activities to promote health among young people and prevent HIV/AIDS infection; WHO in elaborating a national health care development plan, building the management capacities of decentralized health system structures, eradicating poliomyelitis and introducing the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses coordination project; and UNESCO in following up the Education for All plan of action. The partnership with the World Bank will cover the design of sectoral health and education programmes and the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

32. The existing partnership with the European Union in health and education will be expanded to include care for child victims of trafficking. Cooperation with the French cooperation agency in strengthening basic social services will be pursued in the next programme. As in the past, poliomyelitis eradication activities will depend on financial support from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Partnership and fund-raising activities will target the private sector at the national and international levels. Links with civil society will be strengthened and emphasis will be placed on the effective participation of children, women and communities in the design and implementation of activities in order to augment their impact.

Programme management

33. The Ministry of Planning, Programming, Development and Land Management is the lead ministry. The programme will be implemented with the participation of other key ministries: the Ministries of Public Health and Population; National Education; the Family and Advancement of Women; Social Affairs and National Solidarity; Justice and Human Rights; and the Economy and Finance. A governmental coordinator assigned to each project will be responsible for the planning, management and follow-up of project activities and will work in cooperation with the UNICEF project administrator. The monitoring and evaluation plan will be implemented by multisectoral committees.

TABLE

COUNTRY : GABON
PROGRAMME : 2002-2006

LINKAGE OF PROGRAMME BUDGET AND STAFFING/STAFF COSTS

PROGRAMME SECTION/AREAS AND FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAMME BUDGET			POSTS a/										STAFF COSTS b/		
	RR	OR	TOTAL	D2/L7	D1/L6	P/L5	P/L4	P/L3	P/L2	IP	NP	GS	TOTAL	IP	LOCAL	TOTAL
REGULAR RESOURCES :																
INTEGRATED URBAN AREA PROGRAMME	1,687,186		1,687,186	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	298,148	298,148
ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL POLICIES DEV	720,000		720,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	298,148	298,148
CROSS-SECTORAL COSTS	692,814		692,814	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	392,551	392,551
TOTAL RR	3,100,000		3,100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	0	988,847	988,847
OTHER RESOURCES :																
INTEGRATED URBAN AREA PROGRAMME		1,300,000	1,300,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL POLICIES DEV		1,140,000	1,140,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CROSS-SECTORAL COSTS		560,000	560,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OR		3,000,000	3,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL RR & OR	3,100,000	3,000,000	6,100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	0	988,847	988,847
SUPPORT BUDGET	Operating costs		73,064													
	Staffing			0	0	1	0	2	0	3	2	3	8	2,849,140	638,435	3,487,575
GRAND TOTAL (RR + OR + SB)				0	0	1	0	2	0	3	4	6	13	2,849,140	1,627,282	4,476,422
Number of posts and staff costs:																
Current programme cycle										1	1	3	5			
At the end of proposed programme cycle (indicative only)										3	4	6	13	2,849,140	1,627,282	4,476,422

RR = regular resources.
OR = other resources.
IP = international Professional.
NP = national Professional.
GS = General Service.
SB = support budget.

a/ Each post, regardless of its funding source, supports the country programme as a whole.
b/ Excludes temporary assistance and overtime.